

Notice of Public Hearing

LSA Document #10-230

Notice of Public Hearing

Under [IC 4-22-2-24](#), notice is hereby given that on September 27, 2010, at 6:00 p.m., at the Wayne Township Branch, Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, 198 South Girls School Road, Indianapolis, Indiana, the Natural Resources Commission will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to [312 IAC 9-3-14](#) to extend the running season and change the starting date for the trapping season for raccoons and opossums.

[IC 4-22-2-24\(d\)\(3\)](#) Justification Statement: The proposed rule in this package from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) governs the trapping and chasing of raccoons and Virginia opossums. These rule changes extend the trapping season by seven days, making the hunting and trapping season start on the same day (November 8). The changes also include an extension of the chasing season for raccoons and Virginia opossums by an additional 24 days, making the chasing season start on February 1 and end at noon on October 25. The rule proposals in this package will impose requirements only on individuals who trap and chase raccoons and Virginia opossums. This rule will have an indirect positive effect on businesses that have an Indiana fur buyer license since they will have additional raccoon and Virginia opossum fur available to purchase and sell. There are currently 83 licensed fur buyers. However, the price of raccoon and opossum fur is low, and the trapping season for these species is already within the season dates for other species that are trapped (fur buyers are already purchasing fur from other species between November 8 and 15), so it is not expected to significantly affect licensed fur buyers. These changes could affect approximately 4,000 licensed trappers; the number of individuals who chase raccoons and opossums is unknown. The direct benefits of the rule are to individual trappers and individuals who chase raccoons and opossums with dogs by extending their seasons. The extension of the trapping season will allow additional raccoons to be trapped, even if captured accidentally in traps set for other animals, and allow trappers to sell their fur during that time period. The raccoon population is believed to be high in Indiana, and many raccoons cause problems for thousands of Hoosiers each year. Therefore, extending the trapping season while the fur is still valuable will create opportunities for additional raccoons to be taken from the wild. Additional benefits to this rule are for those who chase raccoons and opossums with their dogs, giving them additional time to participate in this activity. The benefits of these proposed rule changes justify their need with the ability for individuals to take (both trap and chase) raccoons and Virginia opossums on additional days each year. There are no cost reductions to individuals or businesses as a result of these rule changes. There are no rule changes that will directly affect businesses. The DNR has the statutory authority to provide for the protection, reproduction, care, management, survival, and regulation of wild animal populations in [IC 14-22-2-3](#). Furthermore, the DNR has the statutory authority to establish the seasons for wild animals in [IC 14-22-2-6](#). The Natural Resources Commission has the statutory authority to adopt rules under [IC 14-10-2-4](#). The definition of a wild animal in [IC 14-8-2-7](#) includes all species of mammals, including raccoons and Virginia opossums. Sources of information for determining costs and benefits were obtained from biologists within the DNR, the Indiana State Trapper's Association, Indiana Chapter of Furtakers of America, and the Hoosier Tree Dog Alliance. The number of trapping licenses sold was obtained from the DNR's database of hunting, fishing and trapping licenses. The number of licensed fur buyers was obtained from the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife's database of license holders.

Copies of these rules are now on file at the Indiana Government Center North, 100 North Senate Avenue, Room N501 and Legislative Services Agency, Indiana Government Center North, 100 North Senate Avenue, Room N201, Indianapolis, Indiana and are open for public inspection.

Bryan W. Poynter
Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

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